

When professors and academic departments abuse their positions

By Gary Fouse

An open [letter](#) recently been sent to the University of California Regents, urging them to take remedial action against three of their campuses, UCLA, UC Berkeley, and UC Santa Cruz, which the letter-signers say have allowed faculty and entire departments to use their positions and university resources to spread anti-Israel narratives on campus. This has greatly contributed to a dramatic increase of campus anti-Semitism and a toxic campus environment for Jewish students. The letter was drafted by UCLA Professor Judea Pearl and UC Santa Cruz Professor Emeritus Ilan Benjamin.



As a former adjunct lecturer at the UC Irvine Extension from 1998-2016, and as a non-Jew, this writer has personally witnessed this same problem at UC Irvine going back 20 years. That includes personally attending and witnessing numerous anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian speaking events, in which speakers often crossed the line from legitimate criticism of Israel's policies to blatant anti-Semitic hate speech. That also includes witnessing Jewish/pro-Israel events disrupted by members of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and the UC

Irvine Muslim Student Union (MSU). While many of the anti-Israel events involved speakers invited by SJP and/or MSU, many events have been sponsored by professors and entire academic departments, leaving the impression that their messages carried the imprimatur of the university. Events actually witnessed by this writer include a speaking appearance on January 14, 2014, by Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) co-founder Omar Barghouti, at UC Riverside, sponsored by the UCR Humanities and Ethnic Studies departments. In addition, on January 31, 2009, there was an all-day conference at UC Irvine, co-sponsored by the UC Irvine Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies, and dedicated to condemning Israel, in which several professors from UC Irvine and UCLA participated as speakers. On October 8, 2008, there was a speaking appearance by Ibrahim El-Hudaiby, a Muslim Brotherhood representative from Egypt, at a UC Irvine history class.

The anecdotal examples, both above and more recently, are far too many to list all of them here, but several more recent incidents should be highlighted, particularly those that occurred after the horrific Hamas terrorist attack against Israel on October 7, 2023 and the 2+-week Gaza encampment at UC Irvine in May 2024. Even after all that, UC faculty and departments have continued their agitation.

Most recently, UC Berkeley professor Hatem Bazian, a co-founder of SJP, appeared at UC Irvine on March 4, 2026 and spoke on "Settler colonialism and genocide in Gaza: The ummah's responsibility". Bazian has spoken repeatedly at UC Irvine and other campuses over the years, and many of his public statements have led to charges of anti-Semitism.

In September 2025, Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine (FSJP) held a protest against a joint UC Irvine Samueli School of Engineering/Tel Aviv University conference held on the campus from September 9-12.

On May 15, 2025, FSJP joined with SJP and UCI Divest in a protest calling for BDS, in which a UC Irvine professor was reportedly arrested for pouring red dye into a fountain.

Also, in May 2025, the UC Irvine Faculty Association Board issued a statement demonizing Israel and expressing support for the pro-Palestinian encampment that was broken up by police the previous year.

And in May 2024, there was the encampment, which greatly disrupted UC Irvine operations and led to the police breakup on May 15. In the lead-up to the fiasco, a chapter of the newly-created Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FSP) was established to support the disruptive activities of SJP. This UC Irvine group, later known as Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine (FSJP), fully supported the encampment and reportedly posted an image on May 1, 2024, in which students were encouraged to join the encampment. Two days later, this faculty group reportedly posted a video accusing Israel of the "targeted killing of health care workers and journalists". During the 2+ weeks of the encampment, Hatem Bazian came to speak and encourage the protesters. In addition, when police broke up the encampment on May 15, two of the arrestees were UC Irvine professors.

These are just a few examples. Abuses like these are happening across the UC system and in countless other universities. It is bad enough that students are violating the rules of conduct with little or no accountability. It is scandalous when university faculty and entire departments are abusing their positions and university resources to advance their political agendas, in this case, resulting in dramatic increases in campus anti-Semitism directed at Jewish students. When an academic department takes sides on sensitive political or social issues, it puts the entire university in a position of seeming to put its own imprimatur on that side. And when it comes to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the inevitable result is exploding anti-Semitism on our campuses.

